

of the latest works in the exhibition. It also alludes to Bollinger's interest in Land Art, a new direction he was considering taking, and as such, it represents a last thought. Unlike any of his other work, *Untitled* is made from neither industrial nor organic material, a bold gesture in relation to the exhibition he planned. Clear, pure, direct and radical, Bollinger's work may have arrived forty years too soon for the acclaim it deserves.

The exhibition is curated by Christiane Meyer-Stoll, and organised by Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein in collaboration with The Fruitmarket Gallery. Exhibition supported by The Henry Moore Foundation.

**Martin Creed** *Work No. 1059*, 2011

**Commissioned by The Fruitmarket Gallery as part of a refurbishment of The Scotsman Steps by the City of Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust**

The Fruitmarket Gallery is proud to announce the long-awaited opening of Martin Creed's *Work No. 1059*, a new permanent work of public sculpture on the Scotsman Steps, across the street from the Gallery. For more information pick up a leaflet or ask at the Bookshop.

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# Bill Bollinger

**Exhibition** 28 October 2011 – 8 January 2012

**The American artist Bill Bollinger (1939–1988) counted among his peers seminal artists such as Eva Hesse, Robert Morris, Fred Sandback, Richard Serra and Robert Smithson. He was included in several exhibitions that have become iconic moments in art history. However, for a variety of reasons, his career stalled in the early 1970s, and in time his work fell into obscurity. Over the last decade, there has been a renewed interest in his work, and this exhibition offers a glimpse into the wide range of the radical and beautiful art he made between 1966 and 1970.**

The ground floor of the exhibition features works as raw and direct as *Wire Piece* (1970) and as delicate and ephemeral as the drawings from 1969. Bollinger considered his interests to lie not 'in the aesthetics of form but in the fact of form'. He made work in order to express ideas – ideas about the physical properties of, and visual possibilities of, the materials that he chose to work with – rather than to make works of art for sale.

## The Fruitmarket Gallery

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Organised by Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein in collaboration with The Fruitmarket Gallery. Exhibition supported by The Henry Moore Foundation.

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Bollinger came to art in 1961, after studying aeronautical engineering. This early training, particularly his understanding of the laws of physics, remained an important part of his work, evident in his choice of materials and processes. Bollinger's earliest sculptures, the 'channel pieces', are made from anodized aluminium, a low-density material used in aircraft construction and aerospace technology. He had the channel forms, essentially window frames, cut and then reassembled them into sculptures, transforming a framing device into the artwork itself. Like much minimalist art from the same period, the two *Anodized Aluminum Extrusions* (1966) and *Untitled* (1967) sit between painting and sculpture: they hang on the wall like paintings and occupy space like sculptures; Bollinger referred to these pieces as paintings.

Bollinger consistently used materials in their original states, where he found focus and meaning. He considered his work 'not primarily expressive through form but declarative through state'. Water, manila rope, chain-link fencing, light bulbs, rubber tubes and pipes are never disguised or intended to signify something other than what they are. In *Untitled* (1970) a steel barrel full of water is a steel barrel full of water, *Untitled (Gorgas Stairway)* (1969) is a clear plastic hose, curved, weighed down by the water it contains. *Graphite Piece* (1969/2011) consists solely of a layer of pure graphite powder on the floor, laid up to the far wall and its two side edges and corners, a dense 'drawing' with unexpected dimensions, unconventionally situated. The gestures involved in the process of its making – dispersing the graphite into a rectangular plane and stepping away from it – remain part of the work, in the form of scatter marks, finger marks and footprints.

Tension, gravity, and balance are central forces in Bollinger's work. Every individual link in chain-link fencing is held together by tension, and the twisted situation of *Cyclone Fence* (1968) effortlessly captures the idea of tension on a grand scale. Taut lengths of manila rope project out between floor and wall in *Rope Piece* (1967), a work that plays with the visual possibilities of the Volkswagen 'VW' logo; the accompanying drawings explore variations on this dynamic. The later *Rope Piece* (1969), installed for Bollinger by Richard Serra in the exhibitions *6 Künstler der Galerie Ricke (6 Artists from Galerie Ricke)* in Cologne and *When Attitudes Become Form* at Kunsthalle Bern distils the charge into a single vertical work between floor and ceiling. One art critic characterised these works as 'post-Soff' sculpture, because of Bollinger's ability to transform a soft material such as rope into a sculpture so tight it becomes inflexible, and to use it to hold itself together, rather than anything else. Bollinger himself wrote: 'To me a rope is a simple, physical expression of an idea, a way of conveying information. What gives a man power today is not what he has, but what he knows.'

Bollinger used gravity to anchor his materials, and tension to delineate their properties. In a statement about *Droplight* (1968 and 1969), he describes the relationship between anchoring the piece in space and incorporating a state of tension into the work.

In the earliest version of this work, Bollinger eloquently describes the effects of the bulb on the floor, 'the light bleeding from point source of maximum brilliance out in declining intensity to indeterminate edge.'

In the same statement, Bollinger writes about 'surface as a continuous foreground existing independently of objects', a reference to his understanding of so many of his works, including sculptures and installations (such as *Graphite Piece* and *Wire Piece*), in terms of the two-dimensional plane and the ground. In his extraordinary drawings, the horizon line is a consistent theme. The ground also becomes the platform for the action in *Movie* (1970). *Movie* charts Bollinger's attempts to stand an enormous wooden log upright on the ground. After falling over several times, the log eventually remains unsupported until Bollinger returns to knock it down, its weight and height pronounced by its toppling.

Bollinger often unites materials with oppositional qualities, with neither material dominating the other, in order to make plain each material's physical and visual properties. Water becomes a sculptural material with mass and form when it fills industrial objects like plastic hoses or a steel barrel. The pipe works bring together opaque and transparent tubes, and the spray paint and airbrush drawings fuse the haze of paint particles with the rigor of the graph paper grid. Doubling or pairing objects such as the *Pipe Pieces* and *Rope Pieces* discloses their similarities and the possibilities that result in their differences.

Bollinger made work in relation to a particular place, often making everything for an exhibition on site. By the late 1960s, New York artists like Bollinger made work that was exhibited in commercial and publicly-funded galleries, but also increasingly, in disused warehouses, spaces more closely resembling artists' studios at the time, and also outside. Bollinger often participated in exhibitions from afar, asking other artists to install his work, or providing instructions for curators to make his work in his absence. In a letter to a gallery owner, Bollinger suggested that a work such as *Log Pieces* (1969–70) only required 'A log to float in water', instructions for *Stone* included 'A stone as large as possible, preferably rounded, placed on ground or floor.' He summed up his attitude to the making of his work: 'It is all very easy to execute, does not exist until it has been executed, ceases to exist when it has been taken down.' Radical and beautiful as this statement is, it may be that Bollinger's easygoing attitude to his work as something that could be made and thrown away after an exhibition contributed to its decline into obscurity.

In *Untitled* (1970), the crossing miniature train tracks may refer to the U.S. road sign for a railroad crossing, or to its imperative message, 'Do Not Cross', but more importantly it is the last work Bollinger made for his last solo exhibition at Galerie Ricke, and one